

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 13, 2006

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, July 10, 2006, was away from the House on business representing the constituents of the 11th Congressional District. During my absence, the House called rollcall votes Nos. 358, 359 and 360. Had I been present for the rollcall votes, I would have voted: "nay" on rollcall vote No. 360; "yes" on rollcall vote No. 359; "yes" on rollcall vote No. 358.

HONORING THE AMERICAN RED
CROSS OF GREATER CHICAGO'S
"READY WHEN THE TIME
COMES" PROGRAM

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 13, 2006

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor and recognition of the American Red Cross of Greater Chicago's "Ready When the Time Comes" program. This program partners the Red Cross with corporate and community organizations to respond to disasters such as fires, storms, floods, and tornadoes. I would like to acknowledge Grainger, an Illinois-based company which has been the lead corporate sponsor of the Ready When the Time Comes program.

The Ready When the Time Comes program allows Chicago area organizations and businesses to help their community before, during and after a disaster by supplying the Red Cross with volunteers. At the time of a disaster, the Red Cross will notify the company or organization and inform them of the role volunteers will have in the relief effort.

Through Ready When the Time Comes, corporations allow their employees to receive free Red Cross training in disaster relief functions. In return, corporate partners commit to making their trained employees available for disaster service at least one day each year. During a large scale disaster, with a single phone call the Red Cross can deploy as many volunteers as needed. Throughout Chicago, Ready When the Time Comes volunteers have put their training to work responding to flooding, massive fires, heat emergencies, and even the terrorist attacks of September 11.

Since February 2001, Grainger has provided the Chicago Red Cross with almost 200 volunteers for the Ready When the Time Comes program. Following Hurricane Katrina, corporate employees were called upon to staff phone centers in Chicago to answer questions from those seeking support and information. These volunteers also participated in the Chicago Office of Emergency Management and Communications disaster preparedness drill in August 2005.

Mr. Speaker and Colleagues, please join me to honor and recognize the American Red Cross of Greater Chicago's "Ready When the Time Comes" program. This program is a model on how easily partnerships can be developed to help safeguard our communities. I support the Red Cross's efforts to afford other

organizations the opportunity to partner with them to actively contribute to recovery efforts.

TRIBUTE TO THE BRONX
DOMINICAN PARADE

HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 13, 2006

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise and pay tribute to the seventeenth annual Bronx Dominican Parade and Festival which will take place Sunday, July 16, 2006. This famed event is eagerly anticipated by both Dominicans and the greater Bronx community every year. It is a wonderful celebration of the spirit and richness of Dominican culture.

Under the leadership of Felipe Febles and Rosa Ayala, the Bronx Dominican Parade, Inc., (La Gran Parada Dominicana de El Bronx) has grown into an important institution that increases the self awareness and pride of the Dominican people in order to promote economic development, education and cultural recognition.

As the second largest Latino community in New York City, Dominicans have made valuable contributions to the city, as well as to the entire nation. Although the highest concentration of Dominican people live in Washington Heights, a significant number have enriched the Bronx with their unique culture and spirit. Dominican culture is characterized by, among other things, diverse multi-culturalism, strong family values, distinctive art, rhythmic and soulful music and unique cuisine. I am grateful that so many Dominicans have made the Bronx their home.

Mr. Speaker, the roots of Dominican New Yorkers lie in a country with a rich history and arresting landscapes bound by water. The Dominican Republic is home to a number of people from various heritages. As a result, the culture is charged with strong African, Taino and European influences. One visit to the Dominican Republic will put to rest any questions one might have as to why Dominicans in America retain such a strong sense of pride in their homeland and never stop missing it.

The achievements and contributions made by the Dominican community has spanned the realms of politics, science, the Armed Forces, literature, public service, and the arts, undoubtedly making them an integral part of American society. The Bronx Dominican Parade and Festival is a great opportunity to celebrate the culture, history, and bright future of the Dominican people.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to please join me in honoring the 2006 Bronx Dominican Parade and Festival.

WOMEN LEADERS FOR PEACE:
CODE PINK "TROOPS HOME FAST"

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 13, 2006

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to enter into the RECORD a press release and letter to Members of Congress from Troops Home

Fast, a new initiative of the peace organization CODEPINK whose members are holding a hunger strike to highlight their call to bring U.S. troops home from Iraq. I pay tribute to the members of CODEPINK who are participating in the Troops Home Fast and praise their creative efforts to assist our troops in Iraq and those wounded at Walter Reed Hospital by many campaigns protesting the continuing occupation of Iraq. One of their peace actions is a Friday night vigil at Walter Reed Hospital to protest the war and thus prevent further casualties. Today I especially want to bring attention to their latest campaign taking place here in the District of Columbia, around the country and around the world—the Troops Home Fast.

While many Americans were celebrating Independence Day with barbecues and fireworks, CODEPINK was launching this new campaign—a fast—calling for independence from war. Among the Washington Fasters are Cindy Sheehan, legendary comedian/civil rights activists Dick Gregory, activist/environmentalist Diane Wilson, former Army colonel Ann Wright, Iraq war veterans, Vietnam veterans, and whistleblower Daniel Ellsberg. They are joined by almost 3,500 others from other countries. Celebrities and other well-known public figures have committed to join including actors Susan Sarandon, Sean Penn and Danny Glover, musicians Graham Nash and Willie Nelson, and more. The group is supported by Gold Star Families for Peace and endorsed by other organizations.

The Fast ceremony began at Gandhi's Statue at Massachusetts Avenue and Q St., NW in Washington DC with a brief Rally and a March to Lafayette Park in front of the White House. The fasters in DC which included co-founders of CODEPINK Medea Benjamin, Jodie Evans, Gael Murphy and Cindy Sheehan were present as were other fasters including comedian and social activist Dick Gregory who has fasted for many causes.

On July 10, 2006, I received a letter sent tall members of Congress from Troops Home Fast calling themselves a "group of concerned citizens who are conducting an open-ended fast in front of the White House calling for our troops to come home from Iraq. . ." and asking for each member's help in this cause.

Troops Home Fast asks for the following: Legislation to set a time line for the withdrawal of U.S. military forces from Iraq and bring her troops home. In the opinion of the Troops Home Fast Congress is moving "far too slowly."

Troops Home Fast believes as I do and as Congressman MURTHA has repeatedly stated that the American people are way ahead of Congress. The polls show that a solid majority of the American people now want a time table and a quick end to our involvement in Iraq. They want American troops home.

According to a recent poll, 87 percent of Iraqis want their government to set a timetable for U.S. withdrawal from Iraq. Iraq's president, vice resident and national security advisor have all called for such a timeline. General Casey, the commander of American troops in Iraq has established a time table. It is only the President and his supporters in Congress who will not follow the will of the American people ho elected them, or the will of the Iraqi people who have spoken and whose democratic government has spoken for them who continue to refuse to hear anything but their own slog: